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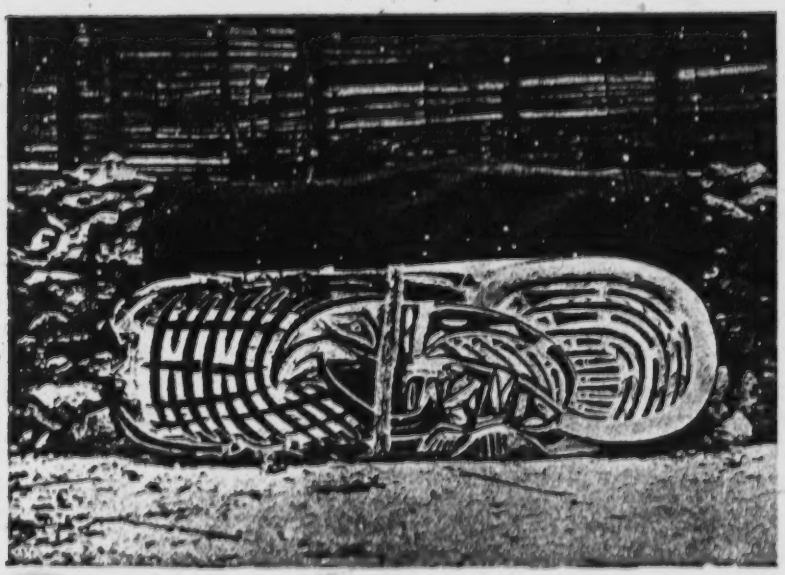
DANCING MASK



MALANGGAN

[facing p. 120]

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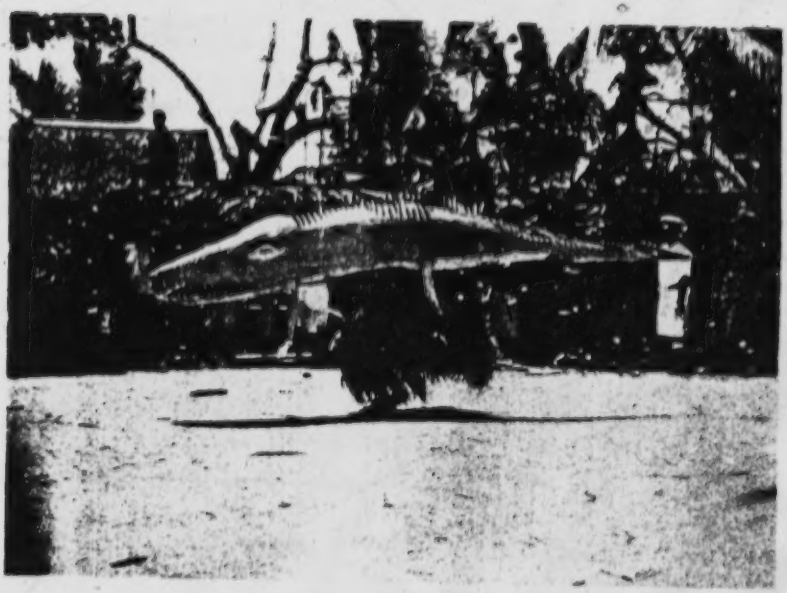

CROCODILE FIGURE IN DANCE

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PIG DANCE

[Facing p.12]

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881 778 535 one, and the hot masks and tight shirts add to the discomfort of the participants. Only the youngest and strongest men take part, and they are exhausted when it is over.

After a short interval, fourteen men from Langania enter and do a very similar dance. The masks, costumes, and music are identical, but there is a slight variation in the steps and form.

Following them, thirty men from Libba without masks dance. Their dance is one of elaborate figures and intricate abstract formation, with no apparent meaning. No native interpretation of the figures and no conscious symbolism was attached to this dance.

In the interval following these three dances some of the Ponatlege women distribute a few taro and bananas to the other women, who eat them.

In the next dance the men from the village of Tandis [532] have masks very cleverly representing owl heads (*dudul*). The entire body of each dancer is covered with leaves. The dance is in two-line formation, and one line is supposed to represent men and the other their ghosts. It was taught to the Tandis men by a man from the Kockopo district of New Hanover, now working on a plantation at Tandis.

In the next dance sixteen men wearing masks and costumes similar to the ones in the first dance form two lines, one of which sits on the ground and represents a snake who wants to eat the men in the other line, who stand and wave sticks representing spears. In the dance the men fight the "snake" with their spear and kill "it." All these movements form part of the dance, and though not too obvious are performed with sufficient realism to convey the idea.

There is one more dance, an intricate, abstract figure, by the men of Laummasong.

By now it is late afternoon, and the dancing is over for the day; the rites will be continued the next day. The men enter the men's house to eat.

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unit, want to make a *malanggan* for Watlau, who has been dead for some time. Kanot is his son and Poinbi his maternal nephew.[1] Poinbi is the one who comes to Lesu to buy the *malanggan* and attends to all the business concerning it. Kanot goes to Tabar, where he has clan relatives, in order to get their financial assistance for the enterprise.

In the middle of August Poinbi comes to Lesu and makes arrangements to buy from Palou the right to make the *Puiba malanggan* of the *Sasabwan* class. Palou is the leading old man of the Sinpop clan, and learned the design and rites connected with the *Puiba malanggan* from his maternal uncle and grandfather. They had learned it in a dream from their *gas*. Palou consents to sell it, and thus relinquishes his right to make this particular kind of *malanggan*. It is understood that the payments will be made when it is finished and the rites are held.

Poinbi returns to Logagon, and a few days later the making of the *malanggan* begins. All the men from Penguli (Palou's hamlet) go to the bush to cut down a tree trunk; they come back in the afternoon singing gaily as they walk with their heavy load. There is a festive air about the beginning of the undertaking. Later Palou pays them with tobacco and coconuts. A small house is now made on the beach near the cemetery, and Palou marks its completion with a feast for all the men who have helped build it. He buys a pig from Manumat for the occasion, and there are also taro and coconuts. Palou will pay the women who have contributed the taro after he has been paid by Poinbi at the conclusion of the rites.

Kanua, the skilled carver of Lesu, now begins to work. Palou pays him one *tsera* in advance, and sits with him in the little house, showing him how to carve the *malanggan*.

[1] There is thus a contradiction here—a clan and a non-clan relative co-operating to make a *malanggan* for the same dead person. This is one of the exceptions always occurring in any functioning society.

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532 The figures are those of Poinbi's maternal uncle, father, brother-in-law, and two others. The bird is an ordinary one of the bush. There are two snakes, which represent the *tsinanis* snakes of the Sinpop clan. A round design in the centre, *mutenalin*, represents the dawn, or the light just before sunrise, but not the sun itself.[1]

532 562 Every evening while the *malanggan* is being made the men of Penguli and near-by hamlets eat together communally, and every week there is a special feast for the men, for no apparent reason except that it is connected with the *malanggan*. It must be remembered that it is taboo for the women to look at *malanggans*, and that it is only the men who are directly concerned with them. It is interesting to note also that while it is being made there is a drawing together of the men and a separation from the women, in the male communal eating every night. Although the women, as usual, prepare the taro, one realizes very clearly that the undertaking is predominantly a masculine one.

532 437 In two months' time, by the middle of October, the *malanggan* has been carved but not painted.[2] Now the men sit up until past midnight discussing its removal to Logagon and all the necessary preliminary arrangements. The Logagon people have sent word for them to come on a certain day, but they decide to go a few days before this, because they say that they have so much work to do. When they get to Logagon they must paint the *malanggan*, build a house to hold it, and teach the people there the rites. This is their work, and they talk about it with a sort of pride—that they must do their own work and not have others do it.

437 The men have a feast in the late afternoon of the day before they start off on their journey to Logagon. The next

[1] The last time Palou made this *malanggan* was at the time his maternal nephew was circumcised, and the figures on it then represented his dead wife and his dead Sinpop (his clan) relatives.

[2] Kanua was interrupted in the middle of his work and went to a bush hamlet to carve a small *malanggan*, which was a "rush" order.

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The *malanggans* vary in appearance; some are the figure of one man, while others are intricate carvings containing the figures of several people, each one representing a dead clan relative. Still others have various birds, fish, and snakes on them. The animals used seem to be merely familiar ones of the environment, and without any totemic significance. Another kind, such as the *Warawara*, is finely decorative, with the *kepkep* (breast ornament) in the centre. Each *malanggan* will also be known as a male or female one. They are usually brightly painted, red and yellow being the dominant colours. A photograph facing page 120 shows one of them.

The right to make each *malanggan* is owned by an individual, usually an important old man of a clan. The other members of his clan are considered as part-owners with him, and would be reimbursed at a sale of one. The old man is more a custodian. He may sell this privilege to another person, and the individual making the sale loses the right to make this particular *malanggan*, and he must therefore later buy the right to make another one. The description of one such sale has already been described.[1] It was a big economic transaction, and one of the main ways in which large amounts of currency pass from one group to another.

The *malanggan* is made by a skilled carver, who is paid for his services. The clan owner sits beside him and shows him the design. The work is always done in a small house erected for the purpose, and only the male clan owners of the *malanggan* besides the carver are allowed to enter it. The house is destroyed after the work is finished.

Myths about the origin of different *malanggans* give the source as a dream. For instance, in the myth of the origin of the *Walik malanggan*, a man named Lunguma, who lived in Tabar, fell asleep while he was working in his garden. While asleep his *gas* appeared in a dream and showed him

[1] See pp. 210–224.

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765 act of dancing and the symbol, or what the dancing represents.
535 While dance rehearsals are taboo in the period immediately preceding death and in the period following death, dancing is part of the burial rites, participated in by the whole community, and represents an outward expression of their feelings aroused by the death. But the dance rehearsals have no connection with death (they may be rehearsals for circumcision, marriage, or some other rite) and as such have no psychological association with the recent event and would mar the continuum of expressed community feeling after a burial.

769 The years following the death are marked by the making of a
532 *malaŋgon* and the giving of many feasts. The *malaŋgon* is an
778 elaborate carving which varies in size and design. The carvings are divided into a number of large classifications, each of which is subdivided into smaller groups, and each division large and small has its own name. On a large number of them there is a figure for each dead relative for whom the *malaŋgon* is made, and sharks, birds, and fish are frequent in the design. There are also other
[424] carvings on which no figure of the dead relative occurs. The right to make a *malaŋgon* is owned by a clan, which can sell the right to another clan. The original owner then loses the right to make it and must buy the right to make a different *malaŋgon* from another clan. When the *malaŋgon* is made and displayed, there are elaborate rites continuing for months and including dancing, feasts and special rites, which vary according to each particular *malaŋgon*.

769 The *malaŋgon* is usually made by a maternal nephew or by a
532 son, if the dead person is a woman.[11] Occasionally other close clan
554 relatives may make one too. The time for the *malaŋgon* rites may
778 be a year after death, or it may be five years after death. The time depends on how long it takes to collect the wealth necessary for holding the rites. Frequently one carving will be made for several dead relatives at one time. As far as the writer was able to ascertain, the making of the *malaŋgon* and the rites concerning it

[11]The clan relative does not actually make the *malaŋgon* but pays a skilled carver to make it according to his directions.

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have no effect on the *tinuato* (ghost), the *gas* (double), or anything connected with the dead person. The rites, while nominally carried out in honour of the dead person, seem to have as their real function to increase the prestige of the survivor. Over and over again I was told that if the *malaŋgon* was not made, the clan relative who should have made it would fall in prestige, that he would be the object of much gossip, and that everyone would say that he did not have sufficient wealth to make one. Nothing more hurtful to a native's prestige than this could be said.[12]

Besides the *malaŋgon* feasts there are many other feasts given after death over an indefinite period of years. They are made usually by one of the relatives of the extended family who observed the sleeping or sexual taboos immediately after death. The maternal nephew and the son, if the dead person is a woman, are the most frequent givers of these feasts. Many other feasts, which have an obvious purpose not connected with death, are held in the cemetery and are considered in some way not very clear to me to be for all the dead buried in that cemetery. A feast given on the occasion of a child having its first tooth, or one held simply because there is plenty of food, will be held in the cemetery and is considered in some subtle manner to be held for the dead buried there as well as for the explicit reason given.

To summarize the description of the rites, it has been shown that the chief mourners are the parents, children, and the consort. Next come the other clan relatives and after them the rest of the community. The direction of the rites and economic responsibility for them is in the hands of a close clan relative, the spouse taking no active part at all. Those observing the food taboos are the same close clan relatives and also the spouse. The sexual taboo involves a larger group, the whole extended family. Intimate duties connected with the corpse, such as washing and carrying it to the cemetery, are performed by people of the opposite moiety, who are not kindred to the dead person, and therefore not chief mourners.

[12]The subject of the *malaŋgon* is a complicated one and a monograph might be written on this alone. The writer will present material in another context.